

Application/Control Number: 10/014,699

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CLMPTO

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1. (Currently Amended): Apparatus for providing access to a functioning vascular system of a patient, said apparatus comprising:

a main body having sidewalls defining an interior region and, an exterior region, ~~and~~ a bottom end, and a top end;

a base ~~being~~ formed at ~~said~~ the bottom end of said main body, ~~and having securing means being configured on said base so as thereon configured for to allow attachment to the vascular system of the patient and configured for formation of a seal between said base and the functioning vascular system of the patient, and said base containing an opening therein, the opening configured being configurable to provide a passageway from said the interior region of said main body to the functioning vascular system of the patient, and said opening of said base being selectively adjustable in attachment to the vascular system of the patient between a first configuration and a second configuration, said first configuration providing said opening with a first given cross-sectional area, said second configuration providing said opening with a second given cross-sectional area, and the second given cross-sectional area being larger than said first given cross-sectional area;~~ and

a cover ~~being formed at said~~ attached to the top end of said main body, ~~wherein said cover~~ and configured to provides a barrier between ~~said~~ the interior region and ~~said~~ the exterior region at ~~said~~ the top end of said main body.

2. (Original): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said sidewalls of said main body are tapered inwardly from said top end to said bottom end.

3. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the interior region comprises saline so as to provide an air-free environment therein.

4. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the interior region comprises carbon dioxide so as to provide an air-free environment therein.

5. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the interior region comprises a solution of saline and carbon dioxide so as to provide an air-free environment therein.

6. (Original): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said main body comprises a flexible material.

7. (Original): Apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said flexible material comprises urethane.

8. (Original): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said cover is integral with said main body.

9. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the top end of said main body ~~includes~~ comprises a mount, ~~wherein~~ and said cover is removably attachable to said mount on said main body.

10. (Original): Apparatus according to claim 9 wherein said mount is formed of a substantially rigid material.

11. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 10 wherein ~~said~~ the material comprises polycarbonate.

12. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the passageway in said base comprises an opening

formed therein prior to attachment to the functioning vascular system of the patient.

13. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the passageway in said base comprises an opening formed therein after said base is attached to the functioning vascular system of the patient.

14. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the securing means comprises a stitching cuff extending around ~~the~~ a perimeter of said base.

15. (Original): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said cover comprises a port therein, said port being configured to permit access between said exterior region and said interior region of said main body.

16. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim ~~15~~ 1 wherein ~~said~~ the port comprises a base for a Luer lock fitting.

17. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim ~~15~~ 1 wherein ~~said~~ the port comprises an entire Luer lock fitting.

18. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim ~~15~~ 1 wherein ~~said the~~ port comprises an instrument passageway.

19. (Original): Apparatus according to claim 18 wherein said instrument passageway comprises a penetrable seal.

20. (Original): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said cover comprises a substantially rigid material.

21. (Original): Apparatus according to claim 20 wherein said substantially rigid material comprises polycarbonate.

22. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein ~~said the~~ sealing means comprises a vacuum seal.

23. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein ~~said sealing~~ the securing means comprises hooks.

24. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein ~~said sealing~~ the securing means comprises an adhesive material.

25. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said base comprises a blade guide for forming ~~said~~ the passageway from ~~said~~ the interior region of said main body to the functioning vascular system.

26. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said base is selectively configurable between a first configuration and a second configuration, ~~further~~ and wherein ~~said~~ the passageway from ~~said~~ the interior region of said main body to the functioning vascular system of the patient is substantially closed in ~~said~~ the first configuration and ~~said~~ the passageway from ~~said~~ the interior region of said main body to the functioning vascular system of the patient is substantially open in ~~said~~ the second configuration.

27. (Currently Amended): Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein said main body is selectively configured between ~~said~~ the first configuration and ~~said~~ the second configuration by squeezing ~~a pair of~~ opposed ends of said main body toward one another.

CLAIMS 28-38 CANCELLED